1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
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It is not pretended that this division of social customs into three different kinds is of any great or permanent value, and it is only introduced as an aid to the exposition of the customs of the Andamanese. It will be argued in a later chapter that many of the customs described in the present chapter have a common psychological basis.

Of any customs in connection with the birth of children I was able to learn very little, as no births at which I could be present occurred during my stay at the islands. Earlier writers have given very little information on this subject.

During the latter part of the period of pregnancy, and for about a month after the birth of the child, the mother and father must observe certain restrictions. In particular there are certain foods that they may not eat. The statements of different informants on this matter did not quite agree with each other, and it seems that there were slightly different rules in different tribes. According to an *Akar-Bale* informant the man and woman may not eat dugong, honey and yams; they may eat the flesh of small but not of full-grown pigs and turtle. An informant of one of the Northern tribes said that the woman may not eat full-grown pig, *Paradoxurus*, turtle, dugong, the fish *komar*, monitor lizard, honey and yams; her husband may eat these things but must carefully avoid eating certain fishes.

The natives give two different reasons for these rules. One is that if these foods be eaten by the parents the child will be ill. The other is that the parents themselves will be ill. The latter is the explanation most commonly offered.

The baby is named some time before it is born, and from that time the parents are not addressed or spoken of by name. For example, if the name chosen be *Rea*, the father will be spoken of as *Rea aka-mai* (Rea's father) instead of by his own name. The mother may be referred to as *Rea it-pet*, from the word *it-pet* meaning "belly." This practice is continued till some weeks after the birth, when the use of the names of the parents is once more resumed.

In child-birth the woman is assisted by the matrons of the camp. She is seated in her hut in the village on fresh leaves, and a piece of wood is placed at her back for her to lean against.

1: Radcliffe-Brown Σ-5 (1906-1908)1922
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844 Her legs are flexed so that her knees may be clasped by her arms. The only manipulation is pressure exerted on the upper part of the abdomen by one of the attendant women. The umbilical cord is severed with a knife, formerly of cane or bamboo, but in these days of iron. The after-birth is buried in the jungle. The infant is washed and then scraped with a *Cyrena* shell. After a few days he (or she) is given a coating of clay (*odiu*).

[846]

844 775 If a baby dies and within a year or two the mother again becomes pregnant, it is said that it is the same baby born again, and the name of the deceased child is given to it. Thus one woman had three children of the same name, the first two having died soon after birth. According to the native ideas this was really the same child born three times. It is only those who die in infancy that are thus reincarnated.

843 In the Northern tribes it is believed that a woman can tell the sex of her unborn child. If she feels it on the left side it is a male, because men hold the bow (the typical masculine implement) in the left hand. If she feels it on the right side it is a female, because it is in her right hand that a woman holds her fishing net.

842 A married man who is childless and desires a child will wear a *čiba* (sling of bark used for carrying children) round his shoulders when he is sitting in camp. The *čiba* and the way it is used for carrying children may be seen in the photograph in Plate XIV. If a childless woman wishes to have a child she may catch, cook and eat a certain species of small frog.

842 775 At a place called *Tonimuket* in the North Andaman there is a spot to which it is said that women may resort if they wish to become pregnant. On the reef at this spot there are a large number of stones which, according to the legend, were once little children. The woman who desires a child walks out on to the reef when the tide is low and stands upon these stones. It is believed that one of the baby souls will enter her body and become incarnate[1].

[1] I could not obtain any definite legend about these stones, but one informant said that when *Biliku* got angry and destroyed the world (see later, Chap. IV) the children all became stones at this place.

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757
751 averting or curing illness: after recovery, no ceremonies of purification take place.

751 8. With respect to these necklaces of human bones, it should be stated that it is not considered necessary that the bones used for this purpose should have belonged to an adult, those of a child or of one long since dead, are considered equally efficacious; the belief is that they cure diseases, and shield the wearer in some measure from the machinations of evil spirits, through the intervention of the disembodied spirit, who is supposed to be gratified by, and aware of, the respect thus paid to his memory. Loose teeth obtained from human skulls and jaw bones, are sometimes strung together as necklaces, or, if too few for such a purpose, they are included among the pieces of bone which are broken up to form the *chàwga-tâ-*; turtle bones are also sometimes added under similar circumstances.[1]

9. The skull and jawbone are carried, either separately or together, merely as mementoes, and are not accredited with any peculiar virtues.

●843 10. During pregnancy, the women eat in moderation, but delight in as great a variety of food as possible, telling their husbands day by day what to procure for them;[2] they are also in the habit of taking as much active exercise as possible, as they believe it conduces to an easy *accouchement*, and the same reason is given for the custom, common among them, of consuming small quantities of *tâ'la-ōg-*[3] from time to time; but this practice may be traced with more probability to the fact that the appetite of persons in an anæmic condition is generally fanciful and depraved, such substances as "lime, chalk, or slate pencil being sometimes greedily devoured by them."

844 11. When about to be confined, the custom is for the husband, and some of the woman's female friends, to attend on her; she is placed in a sitting posture, the left leg is stretched out, and the right knee brought up, so as to enable her to clasp it with her arms. Her husband supports her back and presses her as desired, while her female friends hold a leaf screen (*kâ'pajâ'tnga-* over the lower part of her person, and assist her, to the best of their ability, in the delivery and in the removal of the after-birth; the umbilical cord is severed by means of a *Cyrena* shell (now a steel blade is often used), and when the infant has been washed in cold water, its skin is gently scraped with the shell. Publicity is not courted on these occasions, as has been asserted,[2] but all, save those whose services are required, continue 000 their occupations as usual. Soon after the delivery, some warm

[1] Further allusion to this subject will be made under "Tabu."
[2] *Vide* Appendix E, No. 58.
[3] *Vide* Mouat, p. 294.

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Andamanese is that they have no proper names, whereas their system of naming is, on the contrary, somewhat elaborate, and commences even prior to the child's birth.

2. When there is reason to expect an increase to the family,[1] the parents decide what name the child shall bear; as a compliment they not unfrequently select one which is borne by a relative, friend, or chief; and, since all their proper names[2] are common to both sexes,[3] no difficulty arises on this score.

3. In illustration of this let us suppose the name chosen in advance to be *.dô·ra;* should the infant prove to be a boy he is called *.dô·ra-ô·ta-*, or, if a girl, *.dô·ra-kâ·ta-*. These terms (*ô·ta-* and *kâ·ta-*[4]) are used only during the first two or three years, after which, until the period of puberty, the lad would be addressed as *.dô·ra-dâ·la-*, and the girl as *.dô·ra-pō·ilola* until she arrived at womanhood, when she is said to be *ūn-lâ·wi-* or *â·kà-lâ·wi-*, and receives a "flower" name[5] as a prefix to her proper or birth name. By this method they are apparently able to determine when their young women become marriageable. There are eighteen prescribed trees[6] which blossom in succession, and the "flower" name bestowed in each case is taken from the one which is in season when the girl attains maturity; if, for example, this should be about the end of August, when the *châ·langa-* (*Pterocarpus dalbergioides*) is in flower, *.dô·ra-pō·ilola* would become *.châ·gara*[7] *.dô·ra*, and this double name would cling

[843]

[1] When near her delivery a woman will sometimes be heard saying (assuming the name chosen for the yet unborn child to be *.wō·loga*): *.wō·loga dab-ō·jolike, Wō·loga* is fidgetting me, or *.wō·loga dab-ngó·towake, Wō·loga* is clawing me, or, *.wō·loga ô·to-yârke, Wō·loga* is ready. [During the period of pregnancy, both the woman and her husband are spoken of as *pīj-jā·bag-*, which signifies "bad hair;" the only explanation offered for the adoption of such a term is that it is in allusion to the tortu-

[2] These number forty. (*Vide* Appendix H.)

[3] A man calls a male namesake { if his senior, *mai a ting·la.* / if his equal or junior } *mar ting·la.*
" female " *chán ting·la.*
A man (or woman) calls a child of either sex bearing the same name } *ád ōt-ting-â·te-yâ·te-* (my-name-which-who).
A woman calls a male namesake { if her senior, *mai·a* (his name) *ting·la.* / if her equal or junior } *mar* (his name) *ting·la.*
" " female " if her senior, *chán ting·la.*
" " " " if her equal or junior } (her name) *ting-la.*
Signifying respectively the genitals of the male and female.

[5] Dr. Day writes: "Girls arriving at a marriageable age wear certain flowers to distinguish themselves by"; but, as a fact, the flower is neither worn nor gathered.

[6] Names of these will be found in Appendix H.

[7] Euphonic corruption of *.châ·langa-*.

2:Min G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

881 together, with open hands he splashes as much water as possible over himself and the bystanders, occasionally ducking his head under the surface as well. This is considered a safeguard or charm against *snakes*, and the on-lookers cry "*ô·to-ped·ike, kī·nig ·wâ·n-jō·bo lô·tike* (Go and splash yourself, or *Wâ·ra-jō·bo*[1] will get inside you), for they imagine that unless they go through this splashing performance, this snake will by some means enter their stomachs and so cause death.

881 14. The only difference between the sexes with respect to the *â·ja-gū·mul-* is that with females it cannot take place until after 262 the birth of the first child; they are also required to abstain 843 from honey during each subsequent pregnancy; in their case, too, a chief or elder (preferably a relative) officiates, and not a woman.

881 15. A year is generally allowed to elapse between the *yâ·dī-gū·mul-* and the *reg-jī·ri-gū·mul-*. When this final step is determined on, the friends and relatives of the *â·kà-yâ·b-* start on a pig hunt, and, if unsuccessful, the *gū·mul-* has to be postponed for, in the case of a young man, it is necessary that the ceremony be performed with a boar, while for females a sow must be procured.

16. When all is ready, and the party assembled, the chief presses the carcass of the boar heavily on the shoulders, back, and limbs of the young man as he sits on the ground,[2] silent and motionless, this is in token of his hereafter becoming, or proving himself to be, courageous and strong. The animal is then cut up, and when the fat has been melted, as in the previous cases, it is poured over the novice, and rubbed into his person; he is then fed with *reg-jī·ri-*, and if he makes signs for water it is given him, but, until the following day, he may not utter a word, rise, or even sleep. Two or three friends generally remain with him to attend to his requirements, which he makes known to them by gestures.

17. In the morning fresh leaves of a tree called *reg lâ·kà chàl-*—the fruit of which is much eaten by the *Sus And.*—are brought, and a quantity of them are placed in the hands of the youth, and some more in his waistbelt; he then rises and, as at the turtle feast, dances until fairly exhausted. During the month [262] following the *reg-jī·ri-gū·mul-*, the young persons are called *â·kə-gō·i-*, *i.e.*, "one commencing to eat."

18. It should be added that, whatever may have been the intention and practice in former years, it is not necessary at the present day for a youth to undergo these several ordeals before

[1] This is believed to be the *Ophiophagus elaps.*

[2] In the case of the woman, the carcass of the sow is not pressed in this manner on her limbs or body.

2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

291 remove in some measure the impression that they are naked;[1] these appendages are not worn as symbols of rank or (if we except the *rō·gun-*) of status, and their manufacture devolves always upon the females of the community.

2. When fully attired[2] the men are seen with peculiar shredded bunches of *Pandanus* leaves attached to their knees and wrists (termed *tā-chō·nga-* and *tō·go-chō·nga-*), and a folded Pandanus leaf round their heads (called *ij·i-gō·nga-*[3]), which, as well as the belt (*bōd-*[4]), is common to both sexes; if, however, they (*i.e.* the men) were denuded of one and all, they would be in no way distressed, and in point of fact, often, as while hunting, when perfect freedom of action is needed, they strip themselves of all except the *bōd-*, or other still lighter cincture, in which are inserted any portable objects, such as arrows and knives, that might be required at a moment's notice during the chase.

3. It is otherwise with women, who never[5] appear without an *ō·bunga-*,[6] or small apron of leaves, which is kept in position by the lowest *bōd-*; while men are usually content with one *bōd-* women almost invariably wear four or five, and have been seen with as many as eight round their waists: in addition to the *ō·bunga-* and *bōd-*s married women[7] wear the *rō·gun-*.

291 834 4. It seems probable that Colonel Colebrooke's remarks on the want of decency shown by the Andamanese women referred to the *yē·rewa-*,[8] or to the tribe we now know as *jār·awa-*[9] for they alone answer to his description in going about perfectly nude: all my experience tends to prove that the females of the tribes of South Andaman are strikingly modest; indeed so particular are they

[1] As has been remarked by Peschel of other black-skinned races, their "dark colour almost removes the impression of nudity."

[462] [2] All ornaments are made by women, whether for themselves or their relatives. Sometimes at a "*jeg-*" (*vide* Games and Amusements) females exchange their girdles (*bōd-*s) and necklaces as keepsakes.

[3] They wear no head covering, but carry a large leaf screen (*kā·pa-jā·tnga-*) as a protection against sun and rain.

[4] For a complete list of personal ornaments, *vide* Appendix B, items 25 to 43.

[5] "Nudity prevails among both sexes of the Australians, the Andaman Islanders, sundry tribes on the White Nile, the Red Negroes of the Soudan, and the Bushmen, all of which tribes have as yet no sense of shame" (Peschel, p. 173).

[6] A description of these cinctures, aprons, &c., will be found at Appendix B, items 25 to 43.

● [843] [7] During pregnancy loose *bōd-*s (*bōd-lār-gō·rob-*) are worn by women in lieu of the ordinary kind, which are tight fitting; the *rō·gun-* is also discarded when it becomes inconvenient: after the birth of the child both these cinctures are resumed, the former being fastened as tightly as possible for several days.

[8] *Vide* Appendix B, item 7*b* and footnote.

[9] The *jār·awa-* women have hitherto been seen with only armlets and cinctures of string, to which a few short fibres were attached, obviously only for ornamental purposes.

2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

302 386 [462] 58. *tâ·la-ōg-*.[1] White clay, used mixed with water, for ornamental painting of the person and of various articles, *e.g.*, bows, baskets, buckets, trays, &c.: the work is done by women: when painting their relatives they spare no pains in executing neat designs with their finger-nails.

[843] [Note.—Women during pregnancy are in the habit of nibbling small quantities of this substance from time to time, in the belief that it is beneficial to their condition.]

59. *ōg-*. Common whitish-grey clay, lumps of which are found somewhat plentifully in various parts of the islands. It is used, mixed with water, for smearing over the body when the heat is oppressive.[2] A lump of it is placed on the top of the forehead as a symbol of bereavement, and kept there generally until the expiration of the mourning period.[3] It is also sometimes used by way of ornament on the person, by smearing the trunk and limbs with the wash and then, before it has had time to dry, passing the outspread finger-tips over the surface so as to form some pattern.[4]

60. *kòi·ob-*.[5] Red-ochre paint, which is made by mixing red oxide of iron, *ū·pla-* (*vide* next item), with some greasy substance, the fat of the pig or turtle, sometimes of the iguana, dugong, &c., and occasionally the oil of an almond, called *ē·mej-*, is used. This pigment is applied to the person either ornamentally or otherwise. It is accredited with hygienic properties,[6] and from its mode of application it can be readily determined whether the wearer is suffering or rejoicing. The nostrils and centre of the upper lip are occasionally painted with it, as the smell of the fat is agreeable to them.[7] Before a corpse is removed for burial it is smeared over the face and neck with this paint as a mark of respect, and in order to please the departed spirit.

[764]

61. *ū·pla-*. Red oxide of iron after it has been dried and baked. It is principally used in making the pigment described in the preceding paragraph. It is also employed in the manufacture of the red wax, called *kâ·ngatâ-būj-* (*vide* next item).

[462] 62. *kâ·ngatâ-būj-*. Red wax, generally prepared by men, composed of *â·ja-pīd-*, *rim-*, and *ū·pla-* (items 56, 55, and 61); in the absence of the last-named ingredient *kòi·ob-* (item 60) is

[1] *Vide* Part III, "Painting," paragraph 7.
[2] *Vide* Part I, "Anatomy and Physiology," paragraph 5.
[3] *Vide* Part II, "Death and Burial," paragraphs 2, 6, 8, and footnote [1].
[4] *Vide* Part III, "Painting," paragraphs 5 and 6.
[758] [5] *ū·pla-* is collected chiefly during the dry months; in its natural condition, as found, it is called *kòi·ob-ek·ū·lnga-*; in that condition it is applied to sores, and to the persons of fever patients; it is administered internally for coughs, fevers, &c. (*vide* Part I, "Medicine," paragraphs 4 and 5).
[6] *Vide* Part I, "Medicine," paragraph 2.
[7] *Vide* Part I, "Odour."

6: Cipriani E-5 (1951-1953)1961 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

common in the Andamans, said by RADCLIFFE-BROWN (p. 273) to be eaten by the Andaman Islanders as a protection against rheumatism, is never killed. For some superstitious reason the Onge are simply horrified at the thought of touching such an enormous flying bat. Among the fruits, those of a plant whose wood has such a revolting smell that it is known, in English, as "stool-tree", are believed to have exceptional protective properties for the human body. The fruits themselves smell even worse than the wood, but this, to the Onge, makes them appetizing rather than disgusting. Concerning honey, and the many sugary fruits of the jungle that are available all the year round, the Onge luckily ignore the simple method of distilling alcohol. No intoxicating drink reaches Little Andaman from the outer world, whereas in Great Andaman alcohol, together with imported syphilis, was one of the main causes of depopulation. No syphilis appears as yet to have reached Little Andaman. This is also confirmed by the research carried out by Dr. HERMANN LEHMANN of London's St. Bartholomew's Hospital, during February 1953 in my Onge camp in Labanare (north-east coast of Little Andaman).

II. Effects on the People's Lives

The islanders die young, specially the men. The majority of them succumb before reaching the age of 20; most of the survivors die between 20 and 40; the rest – with a very few exceptions – before 50. Women, after marriage, follow a similar pattern: the death rate among women, however, is slightly different owing to a less corrosive sexual life. Some women may live to the age of sixty, but both sexes age soon, appearing older than their years when still in their twenties. The short Onge span of life recalls conditions which apparently prevailed among prehistoric and protohistoric men. Palaeolithic man died at an earlier age than modern man. The Onge today, in many respects, behaves as palaeolithic man behaved countless centuries ago. – Infant mortality is high; the first five days of life are the most critical for the Onge, owing, in part, to the hard life led by mothers even during pregnancy, which often causes functional damage to the placenta. Delivery is generally easy and traumatic injury rarely occurs; but premature births are common, and so are malformations and other anomalies. Imperfect infants are quickly eliminated by their parents. As a result, only a small number of children are allowed to grow up, but these appear normal. There are no blind and no deaf-and-dumb people in Little Andaman. I saw only two instances of incipient lameness: in an unmarried boy of about twenty and in a young married woman. Only robust infants can survive.

The Onge, so careful about their food, are completely indifferent to something else that is considered very harmful in continental and insular regions close to the Andamans. There, menstruating women are often segregated and considered harmful to the entire community. Not so in Little Andaman, where the remedies applied in the circumstance are extremely primitive (cf. supra) and could probably be traced to palaeolithic man. I saw nothing

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onges

to the arid climate) are among the most wrinkled people in the world.

At birth, the Onges are tiny, attractive little creatures, very plump, but rarely over two and a half kilograms in males and two kilograms in females. I was very fortunate indeed in that I succeeded in persuading one young couple to let me examine their new-born child. Local superstition forbids a stranger looking on a child for any length of time, and even an Onge who does so is regarded with suspicion, so I had to be extremely cautious.

The infant was born on 30 March 1954, in the forest to the north of Labanar. Like most deliveries, birth took place in the forest on a bed improvised for the purpose, with only the father (on some occasions also the wife's mother) present, and the placenta was buried under the bed. The women recover very quickly;[1] after a few days they are fit for heavy work, returning to the group without any purification ceremonies, and this was no exception. After a wealth of gifts I managed to examine the child on the morning of 31 March and again on 10, 13 and 14 April. After this mother and child vanished completely, and the father would give me only evasive replies, although only a few days before he had been willing to help me open some graves round Tambe-e-buiè, allowing me to remove the bones of nine Onges who had been dead for many years; superstition (or the women) overcame him on this occasion, however.

My examinations were all carried out in the presence of the mother and at least two of the older women, who were determined to prevent me touching the child.

The child, like all Onge babies, had no body hair; this persists throughout life, though some males have sparse moustaches. Its head was covered with a very fine, sparse down, not black like the adults, but already showing signs of the characteristic woolly texture. Dark reddish-brown, the hair becomes black and tightly curled during the first year of life. The eyelashes curl markedly in adults, but the hair of the eyebrows is virtually straight; in the infant the former were barely visible, and the latter completely absent.

The nails were strong and well formed, projecting a little beyond

[1] Childbirth is normally very easy, but miscarriages are common, probably due to lack of vitality in the foetus.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

head ornaments and religious ceremonies. In Oceania there is, too, the habit of changing personal names from time to time so prevalent among the Onges, and the existence of actual linguistic connections between Nicobarese, Andamanese, Semang, Aetà and peoples of Oceania have been demonstrated by experts.

Any differences which exist today are the result of centuries of contact with other peoples which the Semang and Aetà have experienced, unlike the Andamanese, who thus represent today the true Negritos. While life generally has changed somewhat over the centuries for the Semang and Aetà, certain typical facets of their culture have remained unaltered. Ritual cutting and distributing of game, the use of the arrow harpoon (always unfeathered) and the simple Onge-Negrito bow are still the same, despite the fact that the three groups have been separated for a very long time. Even the very absence of defensive weapons is a common feature; admittedly outside the Andamans arrows are poisoned and some may be feathered, but this is a recent and imitative innovation which is not found among the Andamanese, by virtue of their constant isolation. The persistence among the Onges of the simple bow tends to support the idea of Little Andaman as the first stage in the northward spread of the Negritos after they reached the island from Sumatra via the Nicobars. In Malacca the Semang have retained the same bow, as have the Aetà in the Philippines.

Among what may be termed similarities of physical habits is nose-rubbing as a sign of affection, found in the Andamans, in Oceania, and parts of Papuasia and Melanesia. In all these areas there is the same belief that pregnancy is due to entry of a spirit into the body, and the same habit of suckling children for as long as four years. Similar too throughout the area are the methods of 'curing' disease, such as smearing with ochre and heavy massage carried out beside a fire, swallowing of balls of ochre, and the 'smoking' of wounds, smeared with a mixture of ochre and honey. As protection from the sun or the rains (especially for the young children) crude umbrellas are made from giant palm leaves.

There are no prayers or propitiatory sacrifices to ensure health and well being, but there is throughout the area the same concept of mysterious forces to be feared, evaded, or let loose against enemies – never loved. Generally they are thought of in terms of spirits, usually active at night. There is some divergence in the